

best interest. The provision undermines the establishment of peace in the Middle East.

I do not make the decision to oppose the full legislation lightly. It has important provisions. The additional resources authorized by this bill are necessary to make up for a history of drastic underfunding and inattention to diplomacy. This bill highlights our commitment to a new diplomatic strategy as our nation strives to heal the wounds between our country and the world.

It authorizes additional funding to train and deploy 1,500 additional Foreign Service Officers. It commits \$1.8 billion for fiscal year 2010, as well as the necessary funds in 2011 to fulfill our assessed contributions to international organizations such as the United Nations. The bill will create an additional 25 positions at the Department of State for arms control and nonproliferation. Creation of the Rotation Program will help to strengthen inter-agency cooperation toward nuclear abolition.

The bill requires that the State Department investigate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the atrocities associated with an occupation that compromises the health and dignity of the Palestinian people. I am hopeful that the report will allow the U.S. to credibly claim a commitment to engage in a more even handed and diplomacy oriented foreign policy.

I do not agree with inclusion of Section 822 of the bill, which reduces the number of Congressional notifications about arms transfers between the U.S. government and the governments of other nations. For example, a Congressional notification is currently required for the transfer of major defense equipment sales valued at \$14 million or more. With enactment of this section, the threshold will be raised to \$25 million or greater. As such, the trigger for Congressional review will happen less often.

Furthermore, I oppose the increased funding levels for the Merida Initiative and expansion of this flawed program to the Caribbean countries. Time and again, research has demonstrated that illicit drug production in developing countries stems from pervasive rural poverty and lack of sustainable sources of income. More money for guns and other tools of destruction will do nothing to ease the suffering of those struggling with addiction or alleviate the social problems that compel people to produce and/or traffic drugs.

This body must take measurable actions to replace policies of aggression with policies of dialogue, adherence to international law and an unwavering dedication to the protection of human rights. By including the provision that paves the way for preemptive war against Iran, this bill continues the failed policies of the previous administration. Therefore, I could not vote for it.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PHIL GINGREY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 12, 2009

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall #335 on the final passage of H.R. 1234, I am not recorded. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

HIGH POTENCY MARIJUANA SENTENCING ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2009

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 12, 2009

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, popular culture often romanticizes casual marijuana use, and those who warn that marijuana is a "gateway drug" that can lead to use of other, harder drugs are ridiculed as being out of the mainstream. The reality is that marijuana today is vastly different than the marijuana that was prevalent in the '60s. According to the National Drug Intelligence Center, the average THC content of seized marijuana was less than 4 percent in the early 1990s. By 2007 that level rose to nearly 10 percent.

Local police in my district are now reporting a new threat from "Kush," street slang for a strain of highly potent marijuana with a THC content of at least 20 percent. The rise of Kush mirrors the increasing trend of high-THC marijuana, which has become more accessible with the rise of hydroponics. Drug growers are able to strictly control light, temperature and humidity and can cross-breed to maximize THC content. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, Kush has been known to sell for as high as \$600 per ounce—creating the same profit potential as crack cocaine.

Today I am introducing legislation to bring federal penalties for trafficking high-potency marijuana in line with penalties for cocaine, heroin, and hashish, all of which have similar retail prices on the street. The gangs and cartels trafficking Kush are the same trafficking cocaine and heroin, and the profits they realize represent an equal danger to the public. In my view, the penalties for trafficking this dangerous drug should also be equalized.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 2346, SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 11, 2009

Mr. SHERMAN. Madam Speaker, I voted against the motion. One of my concerns about the Supplemental as passed by the Senate is the fact that it contains funding for the International Monetary Fund without language designed to ensure that the IMF provide no assistance to countries that support terrorism, raise proliferation concerns, or are major human rights abusers, most notably Iran. Proponents of the motion mentioned their objections to the IMF funding; some raised similar concerns that the IMF could assist some of the worst regimes. However, a close reading of the motion reveals that conferees could implement the instructions without any cut to IMF funding and without adding any preconditions that the IMF would have to meet before obtaining \$109 billion. Given the political realities, I believe that this is the direction the conferees would take to implement these instructions in the event they did not ignore them altogether. Thus this motion does not instruct

conferees to do anything at all to IMF funding and, if implemented will lead to cuts to worthy domestic and international accounts. For these reasons, I could not support the motion.

HONORING SANDY REMPE

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 12, 2009

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly rise today to recognize Sandy Rempe of the Missouri Department of Public Safety. Her direction of the Juvenile Justice Program and the dedication and compassion she has for today's youth is to be commended. Due to her exemplary leadership, she has earned the prestigious Tony Gobar Award, an honor that recognizes excellence in the field of juvenile justice.

Ms. Rempe has worked as the manager of the Department of Public Safety's Juvenile Justice Program for twelve years. Under her leadership, the program distributes federal grants that provide funding to sixty state and local agencies in Missouri to help support juvenile justice and delinquency prevention initiatives. Additionally, grant funds are utilized for training on juvenile justice, system improvements, and intervention programs. Ms. Rempe also serves on many groups, committees and commissions including the Mental Health Transformation Leadership Work Group and the Drug Court Commission.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Sandy Rempe for this prestigious accomplishment with the Missouri Department of Public Safety and for her tireless efforts in helping Missouri's youth.

IN HONOR OF ELLEN PSENICKA

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 12, 2009

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Ellen Psenicka, whose forty-year tenure as reporter, editor and publisher of the award-winning Neighborhood News, continues to enlighten, entertain and unite Cleveland's southeast community every Wednesday, highlighting current events along our city streets—from the neighborhoods of Slavic Village, to the streets of Garfield Heights, to the steps of Cleveland City Hall.

Ellen grew up in Sandusky, Ohio and went on to attend Ohio University, where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Journalism. Shortly following graduation, in June, 1969, Ellen was hired as a reporter by Jim Psenicka, publisher of the Neighborhood News. A few years later, Jim and Ellen were married, and they worked in dedication to each other, to the newspaper and to the community until Jim's passing in 2001. At that time, Ellen accepted the torch of leadership passed to her by Jim, and she continues to carry on his legacy of excellence in journalism, and his commitment to the Greater Cleveland Community.

Ellen's spirit of volunteerism and focus on the betterment of the community is evident